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Letters to the Editor

CIA's Role

Concerning your Jan. 10 editorial "Taming the Lions," I would like to voice certain objections to specific statements and the general tone of the item with respect to the Central Intelligence Agency.

When the CIA was created by the National Security Act of 1947 Congress left open the possibility of CIA undertaking certain special operations on behalf of the interests of the United States when and if the National Security Council would direct such action. Therefore, it should not be surprising that CIA has, in the one and one-half decades since it was established, been directed by the President and NSC to perform such duties. When "cloak and dagger" operations were carried out in overseas areas it was certainly done with at least general knowledge of and approval of the President and the staffs concerned. There is no evidence that CIA has ever proceeded on its own without the direction and approval of the congressionally designated authority. If criticism of the operations carried out is intended, it

should be directed at the Executive who ordered or allowed such action and not at the agency which carried it out.

Concerning secret funds of the CIA, again Congress has specifically authorized such an arrangement. In the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 Congress recognized

the necessity for absolute secrecy in intelligence operations and ordered CIA not to disclose to Congress or Bureau of the Budget any information about funds or personnel. CIA does, however, report as regularly as is required to four committees in the House and Senate (Armed Services and Appropriations in both Houses). The Agency has apparently satisfied the members of these committees as to the appropriateness of their disbursements and activities since the public statements of members are almost universally favorable.

As to transferring counter-intelligence activities of the FBI to the CIA, the National Security Act of 1947 specifically prohibits CIA from having police, subpoena, law enforcement, or internal security functions.

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